

Michel Quoist

by Sadayo Satomi

With only a business bag in hand, Father Michel Quoist, 54-year-old French priest, arrived at Haneda on April 3rd (for details see page 2). It was really symbolic of his simplicity and frankness.

Several of his books are widely read all over the world. In particular, the first one, entitled *Prieres-'puand toute la vie devient priere'* (Prayer for all times), is now translated into more than 30 different languages and over 3 million copies have been printed. The Japanese translation by the Rev. Haruyoshi Fujimoto and Father C. H. Bouchard, CSSR, published three years ago (by the Kyodan Board of Publication), was also a great success, and since then there has been a kind of Michel Quoist-boom in Japan.

Father Quoist was born in the city of le Havre, the most important port in Normandy. The fact that he was obliged to work at the age of 14, having lost his father in childhood, was decidedly a starting point for his wonderful career that has been designed by His Will. While working, he met some of the active members of J.O.C. (Young Catholic Workers), who not only awakened his dormant Faith but transmitted to him the enthusiastic love of Christ. He entered seminary when he was 18 and was ordained a priest in 1947. Actually he is a parish priest in his native city of le Havre but half of his time, he says, is spent in writing and in giving lectures and retreats all over the world.

And so it was Japan's turn this time to have him and to listen to his talks, so full of vitality and unction mingled with a keen sense of humor. Perhaps his pet theory is: To meet Christ in the midst of our life and in those with whom we come in contact, and there to build His Kingdom with Him. I said "his pet theory," but for him it is no longer a theory, it is a matter of really living this out. Anyone who listens to him will notice that he doesn't talk to a whole group of people, but to each individual as a person. He tries to meet Christ in each one. So the greatest obstacle for him in Japan was that he could not read the reactions of his listeners on their faces. Another barrier was the language. It was a real suffering for him not to be able to have personal contact with many people. He especially loves the young and children. He has the great art of grasping the hearts of young people. In this sense, the lecture given at Keisen Girls' School was far better than any other lecture. Thanks to the attentive preparations of the professors there, the girls were extremely alive and Father Quoist himself felt that he could give his whole self in this lecture.

He was also very quick to grasp the general way of looking at things in the Japanese mentality. On several occasions, he emphasized that the Japanese should utilize more the riches of spiritual depth that are not sufficiently integrated into daily living. He could not say enough about the beauty of the famous Japanese gardens in Kyoto.

He said in the preface in his book of prayers, "What is written in this book has all been lived out." This same principle will also hold true for all that he told us and all that we received during his stay in Jpan. We know that everything he said was the outcome of what he is living or what he has lived. Through his person he brought us Christ.

In deep gratitude to God, first of all, Who gave us the opportunity of an ecumenical attempt, I would like to thank personally the Kyodan Board of Publication for its generosity in enabling this effort to be realized.

Sadayo Satomi: Sister of the Society of the Sacred Heart. While she was studying in France recently, she translated the latest book of Father Michel Quoist, Jesus Christ m'a donne rendez-vous. It was then that she came to know him personally. She is professor of French language at the University of the Sacred Heart in Tokyo and served as Quoist's interpreter during his visit to Japan.

JAPANESE MEET FRENCH PRIEST - POET - AUTHOR

Father Michel Quoist arrived in Japan April 3 and left the 29th. During the four weeks, he visited Korea and the Japanese cities of Nagasaki, Hiroshima, Kyoto, Himeji, Suwa and Tokyo, seeing various sides of city and industrial life. His trip was sponsored by the Kyodan Board of Publication and the Catholic Central Committee.

Quoist lectured at several universities, met with young workers and students, and talked with Christian publishers.

"I never sit down 'to write a book,'" the author of a worldwide big seller told the publishers. "What I write is an overflowing of what I have heard people say."

Rather than trying to make his readers understand his vocabulary, he tries to un-

derstand theirs and to write in it, he said.

Quoist also participated in two days of za-zen, Zen meditation, during his Japan stay.

The following are the books by Quoist available in Japanese with Japanese title and publisher, original French title, and title of English translation:

Kami ni kiku sube o shitte iru nara, Kyodan Board of Publication; Prieres--'puand toute la vie devient; Prayer

Iesu ga shimbun o yomareta nara, Kyodan Board of Publication; Jesus Christ m'a donne rendez-vous; I Met Jesus Christ

Ningen fukko e no michi, Enderle Bookstore; Reussir

MODERATOR TODA ATTENDS CONSULTATION OF UNITED CHURCHES



Kyodan Moderator Isuke Toda will attend the consultation of united churches to be held in Toronto, Canada, June 2-9.

At this consultation, sponsored by the Programme Unit on Faith and Witness, Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches, representatives of many united churches will participate. Panels will deal with "models" of united churches, how union enhances mission, and the opportunities and problems found in the lives of united churches.

The consultation coincides with the celebration by the United Church of Canada of its 50th anniversary. As one of its special observances, the UCC is inviting youth delegates from united churches to attend the consultation and spend two additional weeks in Canadian churches. Attending from Japan will be Ms Yoshie Kawakita, a member of the Shinagawa Church and well-known to many as the staff member in charge of the Council of Cooperation Public Relations services.

United churches invited to participate in the consultation are:

Protestant Church of Belgium	Church of North India
United Church of Canada	Church of Pakistan
The Church of Christ in China (Hong Kong)	The United Church in Papua, New Guinea and the Solomon Islands
The United Reformed Church (England, Wales)	United Church of Christ in the Philippines
Evangelical Church of the Union (West Germany)	Church of South India
Evangelical Church of the Union (East Germany)	United Methodist Church, U.S.A.
The United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman	United Church of Christ, U.S.A.
The United Church of Christ in Japan	United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.
Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar	Eglise du Christ au Zaïre
	United Church of Zambia

In addition, the following groups now in the advanced stages of union negotiations have been invited to send representatives:

Joint Constitution Commission, Australia	Union Committee, Malaysia
Committee on Union and Joint Mission, Canada	Joint Commission on Church Union, New Zealand
Church Union Committee, Ghana	Negotiating Committee, Sri Lanka
Union Committee, Kenya	Consultation on Church Union, U.S.A.
Union Committee, Lebanon	

HIDENOBU KUWADA - 1895-1975

On April 15, Japanese Protestantism lost one of its foremost leaders of theology and theological education with the death of Hidenobu Kuwada, best known for his years of service as president of Tokyo Union Theological Seminary. Kuwada died of kidney failure.

Born in Shikoku in 1895, Kuwada graduated from Takamatsu Middle School before entering Meiji Gakuin in 1913. He graduated from Meiji Gakuin Theology Department in 1918, received his B.D. from Auburn Seminary, New York, in 1912, and the S.T.M. from Harvard Divinity School in 1922. He was ordained by the San Francisco Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church.

Returning to the faculty of the Meiji Gakuin Theology Department in 1923, Kuwada began his 45-year career in theological education that led to the presidency of Tokyo Union Theological Seminary, when it was established through a merger of several theological schools, including Meiji Gakuin. He retired in 1967 but was subsequently called to be president of Ferris Girls' High School in Yokohama, from which he retired in 1973. Until his final illness he remained active as a senior statesman of the church giving encouragement and counsel to many.

It is interesting to compare the careers of Hidenobu Kuwada, in Japan, and Henry Pitney Van Dusen, in the United States, who were born within two years of each other and died the same year. Both were Presbyterians, both presidents of seminaries at roughly the same time, both influential theologians, both deeply concerned in the evangelistic mission of the church. If Van Dusen was a valiant champion of liberal theology, defending it against authoritarian dogmatism from Europe, Kuwada was a leader in introducing European theology on the Japan scene and in developing the so-called Japanese Barthianism.

To the end of his life, Dr. Kuwada took great personal joy from his participation in the life of the local church. His pragmatic concern as a theologian for active Christian evangelism, expressed frequently in his books, was consistently reinforced by his own personal witness as a church member. He leaves behind a host of disciples, some of whom may be at odds with each other but none of whom is at odds with their mentor, continuing to hold him in high affection and respect.

PERSONNEL TO HONG KONG, NEW YORK

Two new workers were assigned to overseas appointments by the Committee for Ecumenical Ministries at its April meeting.

Mr. Katsuji Imoto is being sent to the Hong Kong Japanese Christian Fellowship, with his wife and daughter. He has been serving as an assistant at Gyoninzaka Church in Tokyo.

Responding to a call from the Susquehanna Association of the New York Conference of the United Church of Christ, USA, the Rev. Haruyoshi Fujimoto is being sent, with his wife and two small children, to serve for one year beginning June.

Fujimoto, 44, is a graduate of Kwansei Gakuin Theological Seminary and holds the S.T.M. degree from Boston University School of Theology. He was one of the translators of the book of prayers by Michel Quoist (see page 1).

He has been serving as pastor of Shiojiri Iona Church in Nagano Prefecture and prior to that was chaplain at Yamanashi Eiwa Jr.

College. On April 22 a check for ¥60,000 (\$200) from the Iona congregation was presented to the Rev. Elinor Galusha, representing the United Church Board of World Ministries, by General Secretary George Hanabusa to express the congregation's support of this venture in internationalization of mission.

JAPAN MAINTAINS "OPEN DOOR" POLICY

In contrast to voices from Africa, South America and parts of Asia calling for a moratorium on Western churches' deployment of personnel and funds to churches abroad, Japan is calling for 36 missionaries, per requests presented to the April 18 meeting of the Council of Cooperation for forwarding to the Japan-North American Commission on Cooperative Mission.

Twenty-four openings for career and contract teachers exist in schools in the COC-related Schools Council. Eleven career missionaries are being sought for Kyodan evangelistic assignments in urban, semi-urban, suburban and off-shore island situations and in evangelistic centers.

P R O G R A M S . P R O J E C T S

Approximately ¥2,600,000 (\$10,000) has been sent to Korea through the Kyodan Social Concerns Committee for use with prisoners and their families related to democratization efforts in Korea. The bulk of the fund, contributed by churches and individuals in a campaign that began last August, was delivered personally by the Rev. Yoshio Inoue in March.

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Kokoro no Tomo, the Joint Broadcasting Committee's late evening show, rated 1st among all evening programs

in a recent Aomori network listeners' survey. This disc jockey-type program, which combines requests with conversations between a popular star and the "radio pastor," rated 7th among all of this network's programs.

Beginning May, JBC will branch out with a monthly newspaper as a further link between listeners and radio pastor, and among listeners, many of whom are young people with similar desires, hopes and problems. Letters from listeners will play an important part in this dialog-in-print.

P E O P L E

Mr. MASAO OH-OKA, who joined the Kyodan in 1952, has resigned as deputy chief of the Board of Publication to become president of the Japan Christian Literature Distribution Center, which handles national distribution for Christian publishers, including the Kyodan.

Acting executive secretary for social concerns is the Rev. JUNICHI KAMURO, who replaces the Rev. Masahiro Tomura (KNL No. 92, March). Kamuro will continue as pastor of Honda Memorial Church, Tokyo. He is a graduate of Tsurukawa Rural Institute and studied for one year at the Union Theological Seminary in The Philippines.

The court exonerated the Rev. SHUNICHI TANETANI from charges of harboring high school students fugitive from the law and upheld his claim to a higher authority than the state--as a pastor and a citizen whose religious freedom is guaranteed by the Constitution.

The Rev. TADASHI MITSUI, former Kyodan pastor who has been serving at the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, So. Africa, as missionary of the United Church of Canada and Kyodan overseas worker, will become associate secretary for World University Service, Geneva. Mitsui will have

responsibilities for Asia and Anglo-phone Africa in the WUS, a "neutral, non-religious, non-political service organization" carrying on student aid programs.

Effective April the Rev. YUZURU HIRAI is devoting full time to the Joint Broadcasting Committee, having relinquished his duties with the Kyodan Information Center.

The Kyodan Information Center assumed a new format in April. Its primary functions will be carried on by the Kyodan News Letter Editorial Committee and the Kyodan Audio-Visual Committee. Coordinating information activities will be Gen. Sec. George Hanabusa.

Kyodan Audio Visual Committee; GEORGE HANABUSA, YUZURU HIRAI, GEORGE GISH.

Kyodan News Letter Editorial Committee: MICHIKO OKUDA, MAKOTO MIDZUNO, GEORGE HANABUSA, WALLACE BROWNLEE, HELEN POST; KAZUKO MACHIDA, staff.

Mrs. Okuda is one the Standing Executive of the National Federation of Kyodan Women's Societies and is chairwoman of its Ecumenical Relations subcommittee. Midzuno is on the Board of the NCC Division of Christian Education and the faculty of the Aoyama Gakuin Theological Department. The others are on the Kyodan headquarters staff.

KYODAN NEWS LETTER is published 10 times a year, September through June. One-year subscription rates are: Japan, ¥800; Overseas, ¥1,080/\$4.00/12 D.M. Send to "Kyodan News Letter, Japan Christian Center Room #31, 3-18 Nishi-Waseda 2-chome, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160, Japan.